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REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending in this application. Claims 1-7, 10-19, 21, 26-29, 31 and 33 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Steinberger, U.S. Patent 2,466,562 ("Steinberger"). Claims 1-4, 8-11, 14-16, 24, 25, and 27-29 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Marechal, U.S. Patent 3,551,995 ("Marechal"). Claims 1, 4-7, 18, 19, 21-23, 25-28 and 30-33 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Davey, U.S. Patent 3,110,103 ("Davey"). Claims 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 20, and 23-26 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Linko et al, U.S. Patent 3,825,984 ("Linko").

Claims 8, 11-12, and 14 -15 are cancelled herein.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of "inserting a fugitive backing material comprising a fusible material in an installation state into a first portion of the cavity proximate the region to be welded" and "forming a weld in the region so that a first portion of the fusible material facing the region becomes part of the formed weld." Amended claim 1 also includes the limitation of "transforming a second portion of the fugitive backing material remaining unwelded to a removable state and removing the second portion from the cavity." None of the cited art teaches or suggests these limitations. Specifically, none of the cited prior art teaches or suggests the use of a "fusible backing material" in a limited backside access welding application in which a first portion of the fusible backing material becomes a part of the weld and a second portion is then transformed and removed. Accordingly, neither Steinberger, Marechal, Davey, nor Linko support a rejection of claim 1. Therefore, claim 1, and claims 2-7, 9, 12, 13, and 16-26 depending therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 27 includes the limitations of "placing a pre-formed weld backing in the cavity directly adjacent the region to be welded" and "at least partially filling a portion of the cavity with a fugitive backing material to provide support for the pre-formed backing." None of the cited art teaches or suggests these limitations. Specifically, neither Steinberger, Marechal, nor Linko teaches or suggests a "preformed weld

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backing" or a "fugitive material providing support for the backing." Davey fails to teach or suggest a "fugitive material providing support for the backing." Accordingly, neither Steinberger, Marechal, Davey, nor Linko support a rejection of claim 27. Therefore, claim 27, and claims 28-33 depending therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance

Claims 18-26 have been amended solely to properly refer to antecedents in their respective parent claims.

Reconsideration of the amended application in light of the above Remarks and allowance of claims 1-7, 9, 12, 13, and 16-33 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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